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Burrai, E.; Buda, D.; Stanford, D.

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Key words:
Responsible tourism; Slavoj Žižek; ideology; ethics; neoliberalism.

Introduction

It is easy to understand the appeal of responsible tourism which should "create better places for people to live in and for people to visit" (Goodwin, 2011, p. x), both for the simplicity of this definition and for its valuable aspirations. Such aspirations refer to responsible tourism as a way of improving livelihoods and maintaining, protecting, and enhancing the places within which these livelihoods occur. As such, responsible tourism, addresses several of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with the overall aim of ending poverty, protecting the planet, and ensuring prosperity for all (United Nations, 2017).

In this paper, we explore, analyse, and reconceptualise responsible tourism via the lens of ideology, more specifically via the Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek's interpretation of ideology as closely linked to reality (1989, 2010) rather than to dreamlike illusions as previously proposed by the German philosophers Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (1970). We draw, predominantly, on Žižek's seminal work regarding the critique of ideology elaborated in "The Subliminal Object of Ideology" (1989) and "Living in the End Times" (2010) because these texts represent his core and most consistent writings on the subject which have evolved over two decades. Additionally, the focus on Žižek's most prominent work on ideology resonates with us as authors as it enables us to develop an in-depth conceptual discussion of responsible tourism by offering novel understanding of this complex phenomenon.

Not surprisingly, responsible tourism has caught the attention of many of those involved in the field of tourism, including academics in tourism research (Leslie, 2015; Spenceley, 2008; Weeden, 2014) and tourism practitioners (Mihalic, 2016), as well as tourists and society at large (Leslie, 2012). This inclusion of multiple stakeholders in the delivery of responsible tourism is reflected in the 2002 *Cape Town Declaration* which emphasises that

sustainability in tourism can only be achieved if various tourism stakeholders (governments, communities, businesses, and consumers) take "responsibility" (Goodwin and Font, 2012).

The term responsible tourism has been a powerful unifier, with many of the stakeholders in tourism acting as its proponents. However, these committed responsible tourism stakeholders, although well-meaning, are not an homogenous group. While responsible tourism stakeholders may identify with the term responsible tourism, their/our conceptual interpretations and practice-based engagements with the phenomenon vary. This ambiguity of what is actually meant by responsible tourism in practice is exacerbated by a lack of ontological debates limiting meaningful theoretical and practice-based approaches to responsible tourism (Fennell, 2008).

Critical conceptual considerations of responsible tourism have not been given enough robust reflection and, as such, further knowledge about this concept ought to be informed and supported by vigorous theoretical underpinnings. As the authors of this conceptual paper, we count ourselves amongst the community of responsible tourism stakeholders. Our paper is a conceptual one that offers a constructive critique of responsible tourism via theoretical underpinnings which rethink the ideology of this concept. This paper has emerged from our desire to continue to research, promote, deliver and experience responsible tourism whilst also working to enhance and develop the theoretical credibility of the term.

Drawing on the critique of ideology elaborated by Slavoj Žižek (1989; 2010) we address these aspects by proposing critical reconsiderations of responsible tourism as an ideology which often, inadvertently and implicitly, sustain the mechanism of modern global capitalism. In doing so, we map existing terms and debates related to responsible tourism both in academic literature and in tourism policy documents.

Ideology is considered to be a set of ideas and beliefs that characterise groups of people who share similar views and values on social and political issues and as such have

become more vocal and visible (Van Dijk, 2006). What Žižek's critique of ideology brings afresh to re-thinking responsible tourism is a re/consideration of the ideological character of responsible tourism far from being an abstract illusion and, instead, being fundamentally rooted in real global issues. Following Žižek's critique of ideology, we unfold the links between responsible tourism on the one hand and neoliberal, capitalist modes of production and consumption on the other. We do so while acknowledging the challenges for responsible tourism stakeholders within this seemingly pervasive neoliberal system. Our critique shows, that the ideological nature of responsible tourism takes shape within the needs of capitalism to reinvent itself through more attention to moral production and consumption.

The structure of our paper is as follows. First, we discuss the ideology of responsible tourism via Zizek's critique. Second, we examine the state of the art of responsible tourism in relevant academic literature providing a critique of current research, including its theoretical limitations. Third, we illustrate how the ideological character of responsible tourism is pervasive in two key policy documents: the *Cape Town Declaration* (2002) and *Kerala Declaration* (2008). We do so by focusing on the Declarations' relevant principles such as moral production and sustainability, localism and host communities, and human rights in responsible tourism. Our discussion of the ideological nature of responsible tourism principles aims to constructively re-build its meaning and to make its aspirations more worthwhile and achievable.

The ideology of responsible tourism

As we propose to re/conceptualise the ideological character of responsible tourism we draw on Žižek's critique of ideology (1989; 2010). In the "Subliminal Object of Ideology" (1989) Žižek offers a novel understanding of ideology based on the Lacanian psychoanalytical concepts of fantasy, the Real and *jouissance [enjoyment]*. In this book,

Žižek's conceptualisation of ideology challenges the classical Marxist critique of ideology and the poststructuralist reduction of ideology to discourse (Vighi and Feldner, 2007). In "Living in the End Times" (2010) Žižek further develops his critique of ideology through the discussion of the current capitalist crisis which, as he argues, unfolds through four main 'catastrophes': "the ecological crisis; the consequences of the biogenetic revolution; imbalances within the system itself (problems with intellectual property; forthcoming struggles over raw material, food and water), and the explosive growth of social division and exclusion" (2010: x). The collective response to this late capitalist crisis has to go through the stages of grief which are those of ideological denial, anger, attempts at bargaining followed by depression and denial in order for a new beginning to be possible.

Žižek's understandings of ideology as expounded in his two works (1989; 2010) differs from the more traditional considerations of this term proposed by Marx and Engels in *The German Ideology* (1970) who place ideology between illusionary world and objective reality. Theories of ideology enable us to understand the reasons that influence people to hold certain views and, in this sense, these theories attempt to provide explanations on the relation between thought and social reality (Eagleton, 1994). As Eagleton argues, ideology refers to fantasies, illusions and abstractions which are separate from reality (Eagleton, 1994).

In Žižekian terms ideology is placed in closer proximity to reality rather than to dreamlike illusions. More specifically, in the context of this paper we employ such Žižekian engagements with ideology to explain that responsible tourism stakeholders may "hold on to beliefs about capitalism that foreclose a more radical engagement with this destructive social and economic system" (Carrington, 2015: 24).

What is more, as one of the key vehicles for the delivery of responsible tourism, the SDGs can be viewed in terms of a dominant ideology of neo-liberalism. Indeed, it is argued that an explicit goal of the framework for the SDGs is the implementation of contested

neoliberal policies (Fletcher and Rammelt, 2017; Weber 2017). Further critique of the SDGs refer to the 'decoupling' of sustained economic growth from its environmental impact and make the point that decoupling the goals is unlikely to be achieved (Fletcher and Rammelt, 2017). Analysing the situation from the perspective of Lacanian psychoanalysis we argue that "decoupling may constitute a central 'fantasy' of the SDG agenda that 'disavows' the agenda's infeasibility, and thus defers the fundamental question of whether it is in fact possible to achieve the type of 'sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth' that the SDGs promise within the framework of a neoliberal capitalist economy" (Fletcher and Rammelt 2017: 451).

Although tourism may have the potential to contribute to all the goals, in particular, it has been included as targets in goals 8, 12 and 14: SDG 8 – *Decent work and economic growth*, SDG 12 – *Responsible consumption and production*, and SDG 14 – *Life below water* (Goodwin, 2016). Goodwin (2016) claims that the SDGs are about more than growth, however if we critically unpack these we can ascertain that they are articulated in a neoliberal idiom of growth. For example, the SDG which at face value has the greatest focus on environmental protection SDG 14 – *Life below water* discusses the implementation of this in the language of economic growth with Target 14.7 stating to "by 2030 increase the economic benefits of SIDS [Small Island Developing States] and LDCs [Less Developed Countries] from the sustainable use of marine resources" (Goodwin, 2016: 205). This seems to reflect what Weber (2017) identifies as the 'market episteme' where market-based policy solutions are at the heart of development initiatives.

As ideology represents a belief, value or socio-culturally constructed system, responsible tourism, we argue, is an ideological socio-cultural and geopolitical construct. In Marxist terms, ideology legitimates certain social practices to become pervasive or mainstream and to conceal the real difficult socio-economic conditions experienced by the

working middle class. Ideology forms within industrial, capitalist and authoritarian societies where individual freedom is constrained by new modes of control. These modes anchor individuals into desires that the society has created "to increase and spread comforts, to turn waste into need, and destruction into construction" (Marcuse, 1964: 9).

In our economically developed societies, individual freedom is, largely, constrained by new modes of production and consumption where productivity and commodity are often linked to moral values (Carrington, 2015). Similarly, tourism operations on a global scale expose both supply and demand to be confronted with issues that require ethical judgements (Fennell, 2002). Furthermore, current political agendas seem largely to take into account neoliberal views of individual empowerment to engage in voluntary actions for the 'good' of societies where people live or that people visit (Burrai and Hannam, 2017). Contemporary lifestyles in economically developed countries and political agendas, therefore, silently impose modes of thinking which are aligned with individual, often egotistic, rather than collective more altruistic interests and which find justification in ideological approaches (Carrington et al., 2015; Kapoor, 2012).

The way we employ Žižek's critique of ideology is by exploring responsible tourism in relation to attempts to reconcile societal concerns in economically developed countries with neoliberal, socio-political and economic developments. This apparent reconciliation, however, could be regarded as problematic because neoliberal development modes internalise and reproduce societal challenges (i.e. loss of values, alienation, individualism and disproportionate distribution of resources). Responsible tourism aims to address these societal challenges.

In rethinking responsible tourism via the ideological conceptualisation of Žižek through Lacanian psychoanalytical theory, we take further inspiration from the discipline of geography which has experienced a psychoanalytic turn (Philo and Parr, 2003; Pile, 1996)

and developed the sub-field of psychoanalytic geographies (Kingsbury and Pile, 2014) with Žižek at the forefront of such developments (see Kingsbury 2005). We take heed of Pile's warning that: "[p]sychoanalysis is a controversial account of mental life and a troublesome form of knowledge. Unsurprisingly, therefore, there are no accepted psychoanalytic concepts which can be easily transposed into, superimposed onto, or mapped alongside, geography – regardless of the kind of geography" (Pile, 1996, p. 81).

We agree that psychoanalysis in general, and ideology in particular, provide a productive yet contentious lens to tackle neoliberal global realities (Pile 1996; Kingsbury and Pile, 2014). Ideology is not the result of seemingly opposing concepts of 'illusion' and 'reality', instead, reality is the "deeper level beyond ideological distortions' (Vighi and Feldner, 2007: 147). Therefore, contemplating challenges experienced by current societies lead individuals to construct illusory webs of fantasies to escape reality (Freeden, 2003).

Critiquing the '*reality*' of responsible tourism

In his critique of ideology Žižek draws on the Lacanian psychoanalytical explanation of reality as a form of fantasy (1989). In popular views fantasy refers to a wishful scenario as an illusory product of imagination, which contrasts reality. In tourism studies, fantasy conjures up tourist imagination of exotic holiday places and activities, but which are nonetheless symptomatic of more complex unconscious processes (Kingsbury and Brunn, 2003; 2004). In psychoanalysis, fantasy is usually viewed in relation to other-than-conscious psychological activities as reality is not just 'out there' presenting itself in an 'objective' way, but is discursively re/constructed (Buda et al., 2014; Buda 2015).

Such explanations are useful in our argument that we, as responsible tourism stakeholders, act within a frame of a discursively constituted and re/constructed reality which is understood "as a fantasy that draws upon ideological mediation, prejudice and unconscious

desire" (Carrington, 2015:29). Desire is a complex concept beyond the scope of this paper, and which has been discussed by others elsewhere (Buda and Shim 2015; Kingsbury and Brunn, 2003, 2004). Here, we want to acknowledge the connection between unconscious desire and fantasy. The relation between fantasy and desire on the one hand and responsible tourism on the other hand is via Žižekian ideological explanations. Responsible tourism, we argue, is symptomatic of capitalism, liberal democracy, individualism and a societal sense of alienation, because it generates desires and fantasies pushing subjective identities to relate to specific political ideologies, social roles or patterns of consumption.

To Žižek, capitalism, liberal democracy and alienation belong to the register of *the Real*. The French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan has put forth *the Real* as a psychoanalytic concept in relation to *the Symbolic* and *the Imaginary*, three registers that are interlaced and govern human life (Lacan 1977). *The Real* drives us, yet *the Real* is the terrain of that which cannot be expressed, it is intangible and inexpressible. *The Real*, however, cannot exist without the barrier of *the Symbolic*, the second Lacanian order, which is characterised by presence or absence of our desires and feelings, whereas *the Real* is whole, as it is the repository of authenticity, of authentic selves. When such desires and feelings can be expressed through language and forms images in our consciousness and memory, whether individual or collective, we deal with the third order, *the Imaginary*.

Žižek reinterprets Lacanian psychoanalysis to explain and critique neoliberalism, global capitalism, alienation and such like (Žižek, 1989). In light of these Žižekian explanations we aim to (re)define responsible tourism which is framed within the values and the logic of global neoliberalism. We recognise that while responsible tourism stakeholders may well wish to challenge many of the assumptions and practices of neoliberalism, we are required to work within that system in order to do so. Ideology, hence, forms in the attempt to obscure societal insufficiencies and imperfections (Kapoor, 2013).

Tourism, therefore, is understood within these same structures, registers and orders which characterise global societies and responsible tourism is the ideological response to them.

This, in accordance to Žižek and the order of *the Real* means that responsible tourism, if understood in its purest essence and practised with care and compassion, can offer "the social reality itself … an escape from some traumatic, real kernel' (Žižek, 1989: 45). Hence, in our attempt to constructively rethink responsible tourism, we need to critically engage with the challenges linked to its ideological character to understand its limitations. This facilitates a more positive way forward for a more meaningful use of the concept.

The *Symbolic register* – based on the opposition between 'absence' and 'presence' of desires, fantasies, feelings – explains how and in what ways individuals may accept the presence of societal rules and dictates believing, somewhat unconditionally, as a ripple effect, mostly because on a collective level others do the same (Lacan 1977; Žižek, 1989). Here lies the core of neoliberal undifferentiated acceptance of responsible tourism upon an illusionary image or belief 'to do good to people and places'.

We argue that responsible tourism discourses create social fantasy. This collective social fantasy points to the fact that well-meaning interventions of responsible tourism stakeholders might induce a harmonious and altruistic alternative to the more egoistic neoliberal capitalist ventures. Yet, such collective social fantasies rarely subvert neoliberal capitalist activities and, in effect, they interrupt the harmonious and altruistic desires necessary for responsible tourism. When 'doing' responsible tourism as tourists, or even when analysing in an academic context the tenets of responsible tourism, there seems to be a failure to recognise that 'abnormalities' and 'deviances' are integral to our neoliberal system, these deviances are not excluded as we might want an attitude of feeling good about doing responsible tourism (Kapoor 2013; Žižek 1989).

In psychoanalysis, *the Real* is a register of which we are aware, but due to its nature of being intangible and absolute we cannot totally address it. Thus, according to Žižek, we are also not totally able to address and resolve these abnormalities, deviances, anxieties about poverty, inequalities, environmental degradations and injustices. In spite of the awareness of *the Real* with its fundamental and absolute anxieties, some responsible tourism stakeholders may still 'buy into the fantasy' of a potentially illusory activity or product such as responsible tourism by engaging in seemingly feel-good responsible practices (Kapoor, 2013: 117). These practices entail that money and power are invested and used within the field of responsible tourism to assess local contexts, recommend solutions to local problems, or establish winners of best practice.

This suggests that some responsible tourism stakeholders, not always knowingly, may fail to challenge and subvert neoliberal capitalist development of global economic and socio-political systems and, while partaking in responsible tourism and being active in finding solutions for the world's problems, nurture desires and fantasies. These desires and fantasies are unlikely to be satisfied as they reside at the junction between the two Lacanian registers *Symbolic* and the intangible *Real*.

The ideology of responsible tourism, hence, is unavoidably linked to deeper psychoanalytical processes both at individual and collective levels about the acceptance and even the enjoyment of illusory ethical travelling that makes us 'feel good'. In liberal 'western' societies with economically developed economies, "we blindly submit ourselves to the merciless superegoic command (Enjoy!) of the logic of the market" (Vighi and Feldner 2007: 146).

In what follows we turn our more detailed attention towards existing literature of responsible tourism in academic debates and ascertain the progress undertaken so far in the research of responsible tourism. We subsequently move onto the discussion of some relevant

principles of the *Cape Town* and *Kerala* Declarations such as moral production and sustainability, localism and host communities, and human rights in responsible tourism.

Conceptualisations of responsible tourism in academic debates

Research debates in responsible tourism have addressed several aspects such as links between tourist behaviour and responsible tourism (Dodds et al., 2010; Juvan and Dolnicar, 2014; Lee et al, 2017; Stanford, 2008); stakeholders and ethical responsibility (Hudson and Miller, 2005); business perspectives such as marketing and corporate social responsibility initiatives (Mosselaer et al, 2012); tour operators and sense of responsibility (Miller, 2001); and local perspectives in responsible tourism (Burrai et al., 2014; Sin, 2010). However, the focus of much of this research is on the role of stakeholders in delivering responsible tourism rather than an engaging critique of the term responsible tourism itself. In the following we review this literature and present three key limitations around responsible tourism: *i)* limited conceptualisations; *ii)* ambiguous separation between responsible tourism and sustainable tourism; and *iii)* identification of responsible tourism with a social movement.

i*) Limited conceptualisations of responsible tourism*

There are some key academic texts[1] in responsible tourism which have, by and large, tackled definitions of responsible tourism. The widely circulated definition of responsible tourism as making better places for people to live in and better places for people to visit (Goodwin, 2011) has rarely been revisited. Leslie (2012), however, discusses specifically what the term means and what it encompasses with emphasis on stakeholders and management of responsible tourism. There is still limited critical consideration on the

[1] See Goodwin (2011); Goodwin (2016) and Leslie (2015).

existence of a unifying term, which would deepen knowledge on the concept of responsible tourism to meaningfully progress studies and practices in the field.

Perhaps, in part, this lack of conceptualisation is the tangible frustration of many of those writing in this field with some of the literature suggesting that developing labels can stall the process of developing a solution and that there is a danger of "being caught in the quagmire of jargon and debate" (Romeril 1994; Wheeler 1994: 9). With reference to the terms that describe new forms of tourism (alternative, green and such like), we are asked "what does it matter if the definition is not strictly appropriate? …Surely it is the philosophy, and not the semantics, that is important" (Romeril, 1994: 25). There is also the recommendation to worry less about terminology, the label and more about the philosophy, because "the way ahead is surely to view responsible tourism as a 'way of thinking' to ensure tourism is responsible to host environments and societies" (Cooper and Ozdil, 1992: 378). Capturing this mood of 'getting on with the job', some authors state that responsible tourism is not a niche tourism product or brand, but a "way of doing tourism" – any kind of tourism (Husbands and Harrison, 1996: 2).

ii) *Blurred conceptual separations between sustainable and responsible tourism*

What has prompted the emergence of responsible tourism are changes in consumer demand, the identified negative impacts of mass tourism, as well as criticism on the vagueness and non-operational character of sustainable tourism (McCombes et al, 2015). Harold Goodwin (2011:31), regarded as one of the key proponents of responsible tourism, also points to the shortcomings of sustainable tourism claiming that:

> sustainable development lacks definition and measurable indicators to determine whether or not tourism is being successfully managed towards sustainability by

> government. Lip service is paid to the concept: it is used to generate work for consultants and NGOs, to bolster the reputation of companies and governments, but rarely are the outcomes measured or reported. The concept appears to be operative and is often used to secure resources and support, but in practice the principles are not applied, the concept is inoperative, the objectives are not achieved. It is left to someone else. Responsibility is not taken.

He argues that responsible tourism is conceptually different from sustainable tourism highlighting the *practical* virtues of responsible tourism (Goodwin, 2016). Responsible tourism, therefore, can be considered a response to the limitations of sustainable tourism and is often regarded as the practice-based application of the concept of sustainability. However, we suggest here that a conceptual separation of the term from its practice-based use makes its meaning hard to understand. It further remains unclear what makes responsible tourism conceptually different from sustainable tourism. In addition to this, some weakly defined concepts, such as the triple bottom line of sustainability and tourism impacts, are adopted as key principles for (the practice of) responsible tourism.

The interpretation of the term responsibility, which often remains unquestioned, contributes to the problematic nature and application of the concept. The issue is further complicated as terms which relate to alternative business as usual tourism scenarios are often used interchangeably. For example, it has been noted by Stanford (2008) that ethics and responsibility are terms that often converge within the tourism literature and have been used interchangeably by some (Goodwin and Francis, 2003).

iii) *Identification of responsible tourism as a social movement*

The third limitation concerns the identification of responsible tourism as a social movement. Some academics writing in the field have challenged the concept of responsible tourism arguing that it is a way of allowing relatively affluent tourists a guilt free holiday without having to do much to curb their behaviour or enjoyment:

> responsible tourism is a pleasant, agreeable, but dangerously superficial, ephemeral and inadequate escape route for the educated middle classes unable, or unwilling, to appreciate or accept their/our own destructive contribution to the international tourism maelstrom (Wheeler, 1991: 96).

Social movements are characterised by the participation of excluded marginalised local communities to tackle human rights and, thus, attempt to bring about social change in order to improve their limited power and access to resources (Tilly, 1978). Yet, some theorists of social movements add that "addressing collective problems or support of moral values or principles does not correspond to social movements" (Della Porta and Diani, 2006:21). Social movements and changes via tackling human rights cannot be defined as such in responsible tourism when they are representatives of distinct coalitions of interests such as: public, private and third sectors, local communities, tourists, and academics. Additionally, "no single organised actor, no matter how powerful, can claim to represent a movement as a whole" (ibid.), not even academics or consultants at the *Responsible Tourism Day* at the *World Travel Market* in London. Goodwin (2016: 258) defines responsible tourism as a social movement, describing it as "a purposive effort by groups of people, who share some common principles and approaches, resulting in a shared sense of direction". However, this shared direction and common principles of addressing human rights in responsible tourism remain somewhat ill-

defined. In the light of these considerations, in this paper we refer to responsible tourism stakeholders as a *social group* rather than a *movement*.

Illustrating the ideology of responsible tourism in key policy documents Cape Town Declaration and Kerala Declaration

In this part we exemplify the ideological character of responsible tourism through the discussion of some of the principles of the Cape Town (2002) and Kerala (2008) Declarations. Responsible tourism was first presented as a unified 'movement' in policy documents such as the *Cape Town Declaration* (2002). Subsequently, it became a topic of academic interest in particular associated to ethics, consumers and industry providers.

In 2002 the first conference on responsible tourism was held in Cape Town, South Africa, and this led to the *Cape Town Declaration*. The conference preceded the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg and it was organised by the responsible tourism partnership and the public institution Western Cape Tourism. It involved 208 delegates from 20 different countries. More specifically, the conference was represented by tour operators, entrepreneurs and authorities from the public sector as well as members from the third sector, such as charities and NGOs. It also included the World Tourism Organisation and United Nations Environment Programme. The founder of the group Harold Goodwin, compiled the first draft of the Declaration (2016).

A second *International Conference on Responsible Tourism in Destinations* with 500 delegates from 29 countries took place in Kerala, India in March 2008. This led to a second important declaration of responsible tourism, namely the *Kerala Declaration* which developed from the desire to turn the rhetoric of responsible tourism elaborated in the *Cape Town Declaration* into practice. The conference consisted of "four days of discussions about the movement's progress in achieving the aspirations of Responsible Tourism – delegates

shared their experience, renewed friendships and made new ones – leaving the conference reinvigorated and determined to increase the pace of change" (Goodwin, 2008, online). As highlighted in the policy document, this Declaration focuses on process and approaches to implementation (Kerala Declaration, 2008). However, the conceptual limitations of the first policy document developed in Cape Town expose this second Declaration to similar challenges.

Both the *Cape Town Declaration* (2002) and *Kerala Declaration* (2008) represent the two key moments for the establishment and development of responsible tourism in theory and practice. Both Declarations have received considerable attention in particular from tourism organisations and businesses which have focused on the implementation of specific and practical guidelines for the industry (Jamal et al., 2013). The documents have also been implemented in practice by, for example, the South African government which embedded the promotion of practising responsible tourism in their Tourism Act of 2014. The Kerala Declaration is implemented, for example, in the form of the *World Travel Market's World Responsible Tourism Day* and *Associated World Responsible Tourism Awards* which typically attracts around 2000 international participants at the World Travel Market in London (Goodwin, 2016).

We argue that the principles that guide the two Declarations are fundamentally ideological and, as such, are driven by the authentic *Real*. The over-simplification of complex contexts and social interactions contribute to making the principles difficult to achieve. The ideology of responsible tourism becomes evident if we focus, among others, on the principles of moral production and sustainability, localism and host communities, human rights.

i) *Critiquing 'moral production' and 'sustainability' in responsible tourism*

The ethical dimension and moral intentions of the principles included in the Declarations are embedded into the corporative logic of seemingly 'moral production'. Although characterised by moral intentions, responsible tourism products are, by and large, focused on the operations of the business or trading mechanism to maximise capital (Burrai and Hannam, 2017; Butcher, 2015). For example, large tour operators such as Thomas Cook seem to pay lip service to reducing environmental impacts. Thomas Cook do so by partnering with the Carbon Trust, an independent UK company promoting a low carbon economy, "to help turn opportunities for energy saving into real world reductions in energy consumption, carbon emissions and operating costs" (Thomas Cook, 2018, para. 9). This partnership, however laudable, could financially benefit the overall business of Thomas Cook.

Yet, Thomas Cook, and other such large tour operators are still committed to flying millions of customers by air (Smith et al., 2016). Hence, it appears that flying a large number of tourists to destinations remains the primary concern regardless of the environmental implications (*ibid.*). This particular tour operator is present in 21 countries and "has annual sales of around £9bn, carrying 22.3 million customers, operating a fleet of 93 aircraft, a network of over 3400 owned and franchised travel stores, interests in 86 hotels and resort properties, and employing 31,000 employees" (Smith, 2016: 192). This shows that these large tour operators enable tourists to feel (morally) better consumers being part of a "fairy tale complete with the promise of a happy ending of a kind, green, and equitable capitalism" (Carrington et al, 2015: 30). In Zizekian terms, this 'fairy tale' is a fantasy as it constitutes a discursively re/constructed reality and it is deeply ideological as it attempts to obscure global societal challenges.

The focus on the industry to "take responsibility for minimising its negative and maximising its positive impacts" (Cape Town Declaration, 2002) highlights the complex and

often paradoxical association of morals and ethics with business. A vast literature on the moral turn of consumption and consumerism (Carrington et al., 2015) raises the important issue of the perpetuation of inequality and unfairness disguised under the positive values of responsibility, sustainability and meaningful experiences.

The Declarations also refer to commercial, environmental and social sustainability. Sustainability according to some has become the accepted model of the global tourism industry (Bianchi, 2004) arguably fraught with theoretical and practical limitations. Some authors claim responsible tourism to be the operational side of sustainability and such claims further weaken the credibility of the concept of responsible tourism (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2010; Mihalic, 2016). Tourism is characterised by complex socio-economic dynamics, movements of people, goods and technologies and encounters among different actors. Often these complexities are not captured in analyses of sustainable tourism which offer much more fragmented and localised accounts (Saarinen, 2006). Critical insights into sustainability in tourism address its ideological nature which links to the concept of sustainable development presented in the Brundtland Report (1980) moving it away from a more operational dimension.

Since 2004, at the *World Travel Market* in London, responsible tourism gained an important space to share values of fairness and justice among tourism practitioners and academics. In 2017, the awards given to tourism stakeholders for 'best practice' in responsible tourism were based on the SDGs. Yet, the SDGs have not been situated within contemporary tourism studies and debates. Their nature and effectiveness have not been a field of critical enquiry exposing responsible tourism to further weaknesses.

ii) *Limited engagements with host communities and localism in responsible tourism*

The philosophy of responsible tourism builds around the concepts of localism and host communities. These concepts are central in developing forms of tourism that can be beneficial for local people. In spite of the laudable aspirations related to these, critical assessment and empirical evidence show the numerous limitations associated with representations of local communities (Sin and Minca, 2014). Local communities are prevalent in responsible tourism discourses as places where actions of empowerment happen (Williams, 2005). Yet, there is often a lack of a deeper engagement and familiarisation of responsible tourism stakeholders with complex socio-political local structures. This is what Žižek refers to as depoliticisation whereby issues of social development, poverty reduction and social inclusion are, seemingly, resolved by managers or 'experts' (Kapoor, 2013: 3).

The mistaken homogeneous character of communities opens the problematic situation of progressive actions and participatory development in the 'local'. This view acknowledges the importance of personal reform over political struggle at a micro level and moves away the attention from wider political power structures which dominate local contexts (ibid.). We argue that the focus on local communities in the practice of responsible tourism in general, and as presented in the *Cape Town Declaration,* in particular, is fraught with difficulties. This is because of the inability of some responsible tourism stakeholders to relate the concept to the wider more critical and in-depth discourses of development. To mitigate these difficulties we argue that the local socio-political contexts should be understood via the lens of the heterogeneity of local communities whereby local members have different roles and levels of access to involvement in tourism.

The concept of community is often associated with their well-being and economic benefits deriving from local involvement. This association raises important issues on participation and on imposed values of conventional development which is understood as

increased income and unilateral 'westernised' conceptualisations of well-being. Similar to the involvement of international agencies in development, the ideology of responsible tourism reinforces "economically centered development agendas" (Buzinde et al., 2014: 21) which have been criticised for their "exclusionary and imperialistic" (ibid.: 21) identification of developmental criteria (e.g. Millennium Development Goals, Sustainable Development Goals).

The ideology of responsible tourism as a tool for development reflects diverse, ethical and hierarchical positions within host communities and tourism stakeholders more in general. These diverse positions influence the (lack of) formation of policy and constrain individual agency. As Chock et al. (2007) argue, this limits a meaningful engagement with the theory and practice of responsibility. Therefore, it would be beneficial if responsible tourism stakeholders critically reflect on the global geopolitical scenario where responsible tourism operates. In addition, within the field of responsible tourism, we must acknowledge the lack of robust empirical evidence showing the potential of tourism to be used as a tool for development (Chock et al., 2007). Critical reflections on the broader context of international development, its weaknesses and structural limitations represent a useful avenue to meaningfully rethink responsible tourism.

In relation to local people, the *Cape Town Declaration*, for example, highlights the importance of involving them in decisions that affect their lives. Participation and equal access are two fundamental elements of responsible tourism discourses. In previous studies, tourism has been criticised for lacking distributive justice which would ensure a more equal spread of its benefits (Reid, 2003; Chock et al. 2007). Instead, "tourism is characterized by uneven development, ensuring erratic returns and unequal incomes" (Reid, 2003: 4). This is more evident in the context of less economically developed countries or forms of tourism which claim to be 'pro-poor'. The responsible tourism rhetoric emphasises the importance of

the participation of local people in decision-making processes but it is not clear to what extent this happens and how meaningful this can be (Chock et al., 2007). The concept of participation goes hand in hand with power and specific socio-political structures. As Bebbington suggests (2004: 281), participatory development has to engage with questions on attitudes and behaviours necessary to keep "sight of the wider picture – a picture in which questions of capitalist development, state formation, the constitution of civil society and social differentiation all loom large".

iii) *Oversimplification of human rights in responsible tourism*

In the Declarations commonly shared human rights are discussed and understood as if they share a homogeneous character of universally accepted human rights. This oversimplification of human rights, emphasising their rhetorical rather than practice-based aspects, makes their meaning unclear. For example, human rights such as education, empowerment and inclusion are discussed within the boundaries of tourism which follows neoliberal logics of capitalist societies (Duffy 2008). Therefore, a critical reflection of these three principles calls to question how responsible tourism can enable these human rights in countries where such rights stand on different foundations. This rhetoric alienates responsible tourism from its proposed actions and brings the discussion to a more ideological level. The reality on the ground is abstract and the 'complex universal context' makes it concrete (Žižek, 1999: 90).

Žižek, in Parallax View (2006), problematizes the concept of human rights in the context of '*western*' interventions within 'humanitarian' cases, such as the conflict in Sarajevo. Although of a different nature because of its political military context, this case is emblematic in illustrating, in more generic terms, "the very depoliticised humanitarian politics of 'Human Rights' as the ideology of military interventionism serving specific

economic-political purposes" (Žižek, 2006: 339). Therefore, transposing Žižek's ideology of human rights within the context of responsible tourism as elaborated in the *Kerala Declaration* illuminates the fact that responsible tourism is legitimised by prevailing geopolitical conditions and economic interests such as the influence and power of consultants in this field. Hence, for example, when some consultants are commissioned to carry out responsible tourism projects while insufficiently informed by conceptual debates, their work is not always anchored in relevant geopolitical contexts (Kothari, 2005; Laurie et al., 2005). These consultancies, often, instead of contributing to ameliorating local conditions seem to limit the possibility of meaningful local "collective projects of socio-political transformation" (Žižek, 2006: 339).

Taking responsibility in tourism entails the safeguard of social and cultural human rights. As stated in the *Kerala Declaration*: "[r]esponsible tourism should be included in the primary curriculum to foster inclusion, discourage dependency and enable people to engage in the management of tourism impacts" (2008: 5). We ponder whether this vision might be problematic and unachievable because of the unconvincing self-reflections on what responsible tourism is and/or should be. These unconvincing self-reflections relate to ways in which some responsible tourism stakeholders prioritise action over reflection "unquestioningly accepting the status quo, for instance, a situation of gender or social inequality" (Kapoor, 2013: 99). In line with Žižek's critique of ideology, responsible tourism stakeholders act within a frame of a discursively re/constructed reality which is understood as a fantasy. Fantasy and desire push well-intentioned individuals to identify with specific ideologies or social roles (i.e. those predicated by the responsible tourism Declarations). Yet, in an attempt to conceal societal imperfections (e.g. power imbalances), ideologies form and are strongly anchored to the same neoliberal, imperfect systems which have prompted their development.

The subject of human rights is complex, not least because they are dependent on the culture and geopolitical environments of places. Natural and human rights were first theorised in the modern 'west' and "north Americans and French Revolutionists first used such ideas to construct new political orders" (Donnelly, 2007: 7). However, current debates show that human rights, as conceptualised and understood in the '*west*', are difficult to implement in different contexts (Donnelly, 2007). As Žižek (2006) explains, there is a depoliticised humanitarian politics of human rights. Human rights of victims in the '*third world*' represent the rights of '*western*' powers to politically, economically and culturally intervene to defend '*third world*' rights (2006: 341). This calls for self-reflection on the concept and practice of responsible tourism in destinations where human rights, such as freedom, equality, gender, education and health are problematic and conceptualised differently.

To conclude, examining the Declarations it becomes apparent that 'moral production', sustainability, engagements of local communities and human rights can be meaningfully tackled by responsible tourism stakeholders. Hence, responsible tourism discourses follow the ideology that doing something is better than doing nothing, regardless of the outcomes (Simpson, 2005). Development, for example, becomes achievable through the actions of well-intentioned volunteer tourists and Eurocentric models of knowledge are central in responsible actions. In the specific case of volunteer tourism, the rhetoric of responsible tourism reinforces, often, images of power and colonialism through the representation of the Other as a distant subject to be explored, educated or helped (Reas, 2013; Burrai and Hannam, 2017). The *Responsible Tourism Awards Day* at the London *World Travel Market* shows limited reflection on these 'responsible' practices, praising 'best practice' (in volunteer tourism, for example) instead of engaging with the root causes of global inequality.

Conclusion

This paper offers a conceptual reconsideration of responsible tourism rethinking its ideological character. We argue that responsible tourism is ideological because, although real "[ideology] is precisely such a reduction to the simplified 'essence' that conveniently forgets the 'background noise' which provides the density of its actual meaning" (Žižek, 2010: 4). Actions seem to prevail instead of self-reflection leading to the 'invisible mystification' of ideology rooted in unquestioned and dogmatic beliefs (Žižek, 2010: xv). The principles of the *Cape Town* (2002) and *Kerala* (2008) Declarations illustrate how such oversimplification of issues which characterise current global crises (i.e. sustainability; localism; human rights) reduce the meaning of responsible tourism to mere rhetoric. Instead, in this paper we provide a critical reconsideration of responsible tourism to overcome its theoretical and practical limitations and to enable structural and societal changes.

In this paper we explore, analyse and reconceptualise responsible tourism. In doing so, we draw on Žižek's interpretation of ideology which has enabled us to examine the ideological character of responsible tourism. In the paper, we argue that the ideology of responsible tourism is rooted in real global issues such as exclusion, uneven distribution of resources and wealth, loss of values and alienation. However, the attempt to reconcile, through responsible tourism, societal concerns in economically developed countries with modern global capitalism is problematic. This reconciliation is difficult because responsible tourism is framed and develops within the values of global capitalism failing to identify the 'abnormalities' (i.e. global issues) that characterise our neoliberal systems.

To date, research debates in responsible tourism show a limited critical consideration of the term responsible tourism. In reviewing the literature on responsible tourism, we identify three key limitations which constrain meaningful development of studies and practices in the field. These limitations are: the lack of conceptualisation of the term; the

ambiguous conceptual separation between responsible and sustainable tourism; and the identification of responsible tourism as a social movement.

To illustrate the ideological character of responsible tourism, we critique some key principles of the *Cape Town* (2002) *and Kerala* (2008) Declarations such as moral production and sustainability; the limited engagements with host communities and localism; and the oversimplification of human rights in responsible tourism. These Declarations represent the most significant moments for the establishment and development of responsible tourism.

This critical approach to the meaning of responsible tourism has enabled us to reconsider the theoretical and practice-based limitations of responsible tourism. These limitations have constrained wider and more meaningful structural and societal changes. We argue that sustainability and responsibility in tourism require a critical reconsideration and acknowledgment of their links to localised geopolitical structures framed within the neoliberal straitjacket.

There is much potential for future research on the interpretation of Žižek's work in responsible tourism and in tourism studies in general. In this conceptual paper we have elaborated mainly on Žižek's early seminal work on ideology as expounded in *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (1989) and in *Living in the End Times* (2010) because of his in-depth critique of ideology. His other relevant work *First as Tragedy, Then as Farce* (2009) on the crises of global capitalist systems presents interesting research avenues if interjected into the field of tourism. Furthermore, other research avenues include building on the concept of the ideology of responsible tourism taking inspiration from the work of Eagleton in relation to Marxism (1994).

Drawing further on psychoanalytic theories and more specifically on psychoanalytic geographies, responsible tourism can be researched via concepts such as voyeurism, or desire. We propose that the focus lies on understanding the link between the realm of ethics as

interpreted by responsible tourism stakeholders and Freud and Lacan accounts of desire and morality. Hence, the nexus between thought, action and desire can be examined within the boundaries of psychoanalytic ethics.

In line with the turn to emotions and affects recently advocated in tourism literature (Buda et al 2014; Buda 2015), a potential further avenue for research is to examine both the concept and practice of responsible tourism via emotions, feelings and affects. Such examinations would contribute understandings of the emotional engagements with places, or affective dynamics of responsibility between tourists and locals. This can be undertaken by analysing individual and collective emotions such as guilt, happiness, anger, for example.

The ideology of responsible tourism can also be examined in relation to topical subjects and challenges that societies are currently facing, such as overtourism. Overtourism is the term used to describe destinations, such as Barcelona, Prague or Venice that are affected by large numbers of tourists damaging the social, natural and built environments of destinations. Responsible tourism has been flagged as a solution to the problem of overtourism in some mass media accounts (Burrai, 2018 online).

However, as we argued in this paper, it might be helpful to engage, first, in the task of thinking about the concept of responsible tourism rather than its practice. Furthermore, as researchers we could reflect more critically on the problems raised by society at large, especially those causing overtourism. Such critical self/reflections could offer solutions more meaningful to our societies and cultures in line with a reformed concept of responsible tourism. Unchallenged neoliberal assumptions regarding growth, need radical rethinking and the implications for how alternatives to a growth and a '*business as usual'* approach affect tourism and the communities that rely on this activity need further consideration. Further empirical and methodological research, with a focus on ethnography, especially in these destinations affected by overtourism, could shed light on the ideological character of

responsible tourism and potential innovative reinterpretations of the concept, as well as how the term is translated into practice.

Our paper has challenged some of the comforting assumptions of working *with* and *within* the concept of responsible tourism. We, therefore, hope that this will generate further debate and scrutiny of the concept and the practice to ensure that tourism develops in a truly responsible manner.

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Reviewers' comments:

Reviewer #1:
I think the authors have done a good job revising the manuscript in accordance with the referee's comments. I just think they also may need to check the abstract is now up to date and reflects the paper's key arguments.

Your kind assessment and pertinent comments are very much appreciated. The abstract, and the entire paper have been updated in accordance with the changes made throughout.

Reviewer #2:
Overall the article demonstrates some significant improvements. In particular, the explanation of Zizek's concepts and ideas have shown significant improvements and its relevance to a critique of the ideology of responsible tourism is much more obvious. However, the overall structure and organization of the article remains a little discordant and could be improved.
The first half of the article up to and including p.15 is well-articulated and contributes to the conceptual debates regarding the idea and ideology of responsible tourism. At almost 5000 words, the first half of the paper alone could comprise an entire conceptual piece on Zizek and responsible tourism. Basically, the first section introducing Zizek's ideas already contain concluding discussions about the ideology of responsible tourism, which is like giving the reader the climax/conclusion of the argument up front.

Thank you very much for taking the time to constructively engage again with our paper. Your comments have greatly helped us with the quality of our manuscript, and we are pleased you consider the article demonstrates significant improvements.

The second half of the article discussing the declarations does not add much additional conceptual development that was not already introduced in the first half of the article. As noted in the first review, the second half reads like a list and skims overs very important themes in just a few sentences for each "theme". One concern is that the author(s) attempt to discuss all the principles of two declarations. Perhaps focusing on a few key issues that best illustrate "responsible tourism as ideology" would better serve the purpose of a conceptual article.
Grouping the declaration principles into themes also does not seem to add anything to the discussion. Grouping the seven Cape Town principles into five themes does not offer any useful summarization the declarations' content or any useful visualization of the material. Table 1. simply presents a bullet point list of themes and principles without demonstrating any connection between the two. Table 2 shows a better relationship between the principles and themes, but has two "sustainability" thematic areas and is not in the order it is presented in the text. For example, in the text "sustainability" is discussed as a theme before "image" but listed in the reverse in the table, while "stakeholder and governance is listed as thematic area four but discussed as the third theme in the text. Then on page 30 marketing/image (theme 2) is discussed once again following theme 3, making this entire section confusing to follow. This section needs better structure and flow.

Thank you for your pertinent suggestions to rework the paper. We have followed most of them. We did the following: 1) deleted the Tables as you indicated; 2) we focused on a few key issues in the two Declarations that best illustrate 'responsible tourism as ideology'. We re-worked this entire section with three subsections, see pages 16-24.

Considering the article is over 10,000 long the author(s)/editor(s) may consider ways to cut down the word count, making the argument more concise and readable. The following are suggestions on how this may be accomplished. First, the strength of the article are the conceptual arguments being made in the first half of the paper. One way to balance out the article could be to use this first section as a means to introduce Zizek's concept of ideology and move the commentary on how it relates to responsible tourism to a concluding discussion section. The final discussion section could be entitled "The ideology of responsible tourism" as this is the main premise and contribution of the article. The rest of the article—book ended the introduction to Zizek's ideology and the final discussion section on the ideology of responsible tourism—could include a discussion on the two Declarations, but in a much more directed and argumentative manner.

Yes, we agree. The word count has been reduced from 11,832 words to 9,284 words. We have largely followed your advice on how to do this.
We, the three co-authors, have thought long and hard about the first half of the paper and your suggestions to divide this first half into a section titled 'Introduction to Zizek's ideology' and a final discussion section titled 'The ideology of responsible tourism' possibly including a discussion on the two Declarations.
We have attempted to do so, the result was an iteration weaker and diluted in its argument. Our approach is less a climactic one in offering conclusions at the end of the paper, but a more 'horizontal' critique of the ideology of responsible tourism via Zizek's theory.
As such, we have interjected a subtitle "Critiquing the 'reality' of responsible tourism" (see page 8) to make the section easier to read and to guide the reader in a clearer way.

From this reviewer's perspective the principles do not need to be grouped into themes and the tables could be removed as they do not contribute to the conceptual development being presented. It is recommended that the discussions regarding the declarations be shortened significantly and more focused on a few key points that tell the reader in more detail how these documents are ideological, how these ideologies are articulated and expressed through using a few detailed examples. In this way the text could be reduced also by not having to introduce the "methodology" of turning the principles in to themes.

Agreed, we no longer attempt to discuss all the principles of the two Declarations. We do so by focusing on the Declarations' relevant principles such as moral production and sustainability, localism and host communities, and human rights in responsible tourism, see pages 4; 11; 16-24.

Overall, this article has strong potential to contribute to the tourism literature by introducing Zizek's critique of ideology to responsible tourism literature. It is therefore recommended that the article be accepted subject to revision.

We thank you for all your insightful comments which helped us to develop a tighter and more focused paper.

Reviewer #3:
Overall the paper is an important contribution the critique of the ideology of responsible tourism. I do believe it is well suited for the Journal of Sustainable Tourism. However, the manuscript still requires revision to meet the standards of the Journal. The paper needs to be shortened as it is currently too long and conceptually tightened.

Thank you very much for taking the time to constructively engage again with our paper. Your comments have greatly helped us to improve the quality of our manuscript, and we are pleased you consider the article demonstrates significant improvements.
We agree and the word count has been reduced from 11,832 to 9,284 words. We have largely followed your advice on how to do this.

The first half of the paper is very strong however the second half is weaker. It feels as though author(s) are trying to "cram in" too much information and are therefore only touching on many topics. The tables could be reworked or removed because they do not seem to add as much content as would warrant their inclusion.

Thank you for your pertinent suggestions to rework the paper. We have followed your suggestions by doing the following: 1) deleted the Tables as you indicated; 2) we focused on a few key issues in the two Declarations that best illustrate 'responsible tourism as ideology'. We re-worked this entire section with three subsections, see pages 16-24.

Therefore, once the author(s) have reworked the manuscript to consolidate and refine the conceptual contributions, the abstract, introduction and conclusion should be revised accordingly. The author(s) should be congratulated for their overall contributions to the understanding of the ideology of responsible tourism

We thank you for all your insightful comments which helped us to develop a tighter and more focused paper.